APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/628,217	07/28/2003	Thomas D. Erickson	YOR920030090US1	5463

877 7590 05/02/2007		EXAMINER
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

	Application No.	Applicant(s)
Office Action Summary	10/628,217	ERICKSON ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Mitra Kianersi	2145	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE <u>03</u> MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on <u>08042003</u>.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) <u>1-30</u> is/are pending in the application.

　　4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) <u>1-30</u> is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☒ The drawing(s) filed on <u>08042003</u> is/are: a)☒ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

　　Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

　　Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

　　a)☐ All　b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

　　　1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

　　　2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

　　　3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

　　* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1)☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2)☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3)☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
　　Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>08042003</u>.

4)☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
　　Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .

5)☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application

6)☐ Other: _____.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all

obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over

(MIT Media Lab, Visualizing Conversation by Judith Donath et al., July 2003).

Claims 1 and 16: An article of manufacture in computer readable form comprising

computer readable program code means embodied therein for performing in a computer

system a method for providing an online collaborative environment for at least one user,

(chat circles, a graphical interface for synchronous conversation and loom which is

visualization of threaded are key issues in generation, design and use of graphical

interface for persistent conversation, page 2) computer readable program code means

for causing a computer to effect the method comprising the steps of:

a) creating an instance of an online meeting, the instance including phases, and an

agenda of the meeting's phases; (fig. 1, is a text based chat which display the

participant's comments in a linear stream, page 3)

b) receiving input from at least one user;(upon entering the system each user chooses a

unique color, which is used as a marker of identity, (page 5, lines 1-2), identity is also

marked by location, for participants will tend to remain in the same spot for extended

periods of time. Page 5, lines 13-15)

c) depicting said input in a graphical representation including a set of objects; (with

every user's history displayed on the screen, lurkers as well as those who dominate

conversation are recognizable. The interface creates a snapshot of an entire

conversation in one image. (Page 6, lines 27-30)

d) forwarding said representation to said at least one user. (the renderings reveal

patterns indicative of a person's role in the community and the type of discussion

prevalent in a particular group, page 7).

Although Donath et al. do not explicitly teach each and every element of claimed invention, however Donath teach a graphical interface for synchronous conversation and Loom, a visualization of threaded discussion, which explores key issues in the generation, design and use of graphical interfaces for persistent conversations. Therefore, it is obvious for an ordinary skill in the art to employ a system like the prior art to increase the ability of computer mediated discussion to carry subtler and more nuanced messages both by giving people a richer environment in which to interact and by providing them with greater insight into the underlying social patterns of their virtual community.

Claims 2 and 17: An article further comprising means for:

Determining if all meeting phases have been completed; (chat circles 3 is a graphical interface for synchronous communications that does not make use of representational graphics. Page 4)

If all meeting phases have been completed, terminating the meeting instance; (while one can see all the participants at once, one can only hear of those one is sufficiently close to. Viewed over time chat circles creates a visual record of conversational patterns, one sees who are the active, animated participants and one can watch the emergence and dissolution of conversational groups. Page 4)

If all meeting phases have not been completed, repeating steps a) - d) until all phases specified in said agenda are completed. (the key features of on-line conversation is persistence and that they bring persistence to the more ephemeral synchronous chats, page 2)

Claims 3 and 18: An article wherein the step of depicting includes an indication of said at least one user's activity, based on a comparison of said activity with a criterion. (while one can see all the participants at once, one can only hear of those one is sufficiently close to. Viewed over time chat circles creates a visual record of conversational patterns, one sees who are the active, animated participants and one can watch the emergence and dissolution of conversational groups. Page 4)

Claims 4 and 19: An article wherein said user input is selected from the group comprising a query, a response, a text comment, and a task specification; and wherein said representation includes a handle to said input, which can later be used to retrieve said input. (Related work in information retrieval includes recognizing the point of view of a message, page 10)

Claims 5 and 20: An article including means for providing a dynamic determination of the next active phase based on results or analysis of participation of previous phase(s). (loom uses a simple decision making algorithm that classifies each message, page 10)

Claims 6 and 21: An article wherein said at least one user is assigned a role and the type of input and associated phase in which input can be given is restricted by the role. (the renderings in loom reveal patterns indicative of a person's role in the community and the the type of the discussion prevalent in a particular group, page 7)

Claims 7 and 22: An article wherein the active phase is emphasized in a visual representation of the meeting. (Loom5 is a visualization tool for Usenet groups and creates visualizations of the participants and interactions in a threaded newsgroup, page 7)

Claims 8 and 23: An article of providing a transition from one phase to an earlier phase in said agenda; and providing at least one of a graphic representation of one or more interactions of a given loop; and means for enabling said at least one user to review an earlier iteration of said loop. (in the conversational interface each person who is connected to the chat's server appear as a circle. When the user posts a message, their circle grows and accommodates the text inside it. Page 4)

Claims 9 and 24: An article according to claim 1, wherein said representation includes both graphic and text section and where the content of said text section is automatically adjusted to match user selection of the point of focus in the graphic section. (while one can see all the participants at once, one can only hear of those one is sufficiently close to. Viewed over time chat circles creates a visual record of conversational patterns, one sees who are the active, animated participants and one can watch the emergence and dissolution of conversational groups).

Claims 10 and 25: An article according including showing in said graphic section said at least one user's visiting a previous or future phase. (one sees who are the active, animated participants and one can watch the emergence and dissolution of conversational groups, page 4)

Claims 11 and 26: An article according to claim 9, including means for setting status of objects in said graphic representation to one or more of: Open/Locked; New Information/Seen; Glitter/No Glitter. (this step is content patterns provided by loom visualization which is an approach to visualizing the messages by classifying them into categories which are then displayed as color-coded dots, or any other set of content-based patterns. Page 9)

Claim 12: A system for providing an instance of an online collaborative meeting for at least one user, the system comprising: a) a database that provides persistent access to data; b) a server that enables the creation of an instance of an agenda driven meeting and that receives all meeting inputs, logs said inputs in said database, updates a representation of said instance, and forwards the representation to said at least one user; and c) at least one client enabling said at least one user to enter and input and receive said representation. (the abstract graphics of chat circles lends itself to creating a visual archive, one that is self-documenting in its highlighting of salient events, page 6)

Claim 13: A system wherein the server is a web-portal and said receiving and forwarding is performed using the HTTP protocol. (like text-based chat displays, fig.1)

Claim 14: A system further comprising creating an archive version of the completed meeting instance. (the graphical interface to the chat circles archives, fig. 4)

Claim 5: A system further comprising means for: at least one user retrieving said meeting archive; and at least one user replaying said meeting instance, said replay including at least one of the instances phases. (the abstract graphics of chat circles lends itself to creating a visual archive, one that is self-documenting in its highlighting of salient events, page 6)

Claim 27: A method enabling a service organization to give a customer organization the ability to use Agenda-Driven Meetings, the method consisting of the following steps: ensuring the customer organization has the hardware and software required to host the Agenda-Driven Meeting service, including a database; determining meeting types that are useful for said customer organization; Adding templates for said meeting types to said database. (the abstract graphics of chat circles lends itself to creating a visual archive, one that is self-documenting in its highlighting of salient events, page 6)

Claim 28: A system further consisting of the service organization providing upgrades, or new templates useful to said customer. (Conversation Landscape is designed to reveal the interaction patterns of the conversation at a glance. Clusters of activity - logins and log-outs, flurries of animated discussion - become evident as do periods of silence. With every user's history displayed on the screen, lurkers as well as those who dominate conversations are recognizable. The interface creates a snapshot of an entire conversation in one image. Page 6)

Claim 29: A method wherein said upgrades and additions are provided by said service organization to said customer organization periodically. (Conversation Landscape is designed to reveal the interaction patterns of the conversation at a glance. Clusters of activity - logins and log-outs, flurries of animated discussion - become evident as do periods of silence. With every user's history displayed on the screen, lurkers as well as those who dominate conversations are recognizable. The interface creates a snapshot of an entire conversation in one image. Page 6)

Claim 30: An article including means for enabling a given user to participate in a given instance of an online meeting either synchronously or asynchronously. (Chat circles 3 are a graphical interface for synchronous communications that a colored circle on the screen represents each participant. Page 4)

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mitra Kianersi whose telephone number is (571) 272-3915. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00AM-4:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jason Cordone can be reached on (571) 272-3933. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Mitra Kianersi
April/27/2007

JASON CARDONE
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER